

Dear Boy

I've just been watching your mother's face as she was writing to you. I don't know what she said, but I'll bank on it that she was telling you some things you ought to know, because she's been at work for nearly two hours, and she's worn all the paint off the end of the pen holder.

She's spent days going over all your civilian clothes and the house smells so of camphor balls that I have to smoke that extra cigar every evening in self defense. Your room's all ready for you—sheets on the bed, and everything.

I have an idea you'd better read that letter of hers over two or three times. She believes in you, but there never was a mother who didn't have, somewhere down deep in her soul, just enough fear of human nature to make her worry about her son. So, if she's given you any advice, take it. I know that all she's asked of you is a square deal, and I know you well enough to be sure you'll give her that, and then some.

I'm not expecting you to drop in on us before next Sunday, anyway, but when you do I think I can scrape up the interest on a Liberty Bond or so to buy a new suit and a pair of regular shoes for you. So don't wait any longer than you have to—and while you're waiting, don't forget that square deal. It means a lot to her, and to me.

Hastily,

Dad



WC
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Letters from Home



Letters from Home



Son of Mine

They're sending you home to me at last.

Through all these months of waiting and longing, I've been wearing a star for you and holding my head high and thinking wonderful thoughts about you. I've watched you through ocean mists and dreamed anxious dreams. Yes, and cried a little, too, but not where people could see.

And now you're coming home. Oh, it seems too good to be true. I've just read your letters again. They say so much more than you ever thought when you were writing them. Just happenings—that's all most of the things you wrote about were to you. But to me they said you were facing the biggest thing in life, facing it bravely as I should want my son to face it. You were offering your body and your soul for a thing bigger than you or me or America.

Don't think me silly or sentimental because I say these things. Just remember that while you were going through that fire and terror I had to sit here and smile. I had to be as brave as you, so that you shouldn't be ashamed of me. When I wrote to you I tried to write cheerful, encouraging letters, because I did not want you to go into battle feeling that I was holding you back from the big sacrifice. It's only now, when the fighting is over, that I can let down a little and be just your mother, just the woman who loves you better than anything else in the world and is so glad to know you're coming back to her that she doesn't care who sees her cry.

Perhaps for some of the boys who have stood with you so finely through these trials the fighting is not yet all over. The fighting I mean is that between a man and himself, and for many of them this will be the hardest battle of all. During the long days and evenings of waiting before they can start for home, thoughts will creep into their minds which will be hard to resist. There will be times, after all these months of

action, when the longing for change and for the companionship of women may lead them into associations which will spoil their homecoming and cause them shame and humiliation and even perhaps make them unfit to receive the love that awaits them here.

You, dearest boy, are just as human as your comrades, and feelings like these may come to you, too. I don't ask you to crush them—they are only natural and they only prove that war has failed to dry up the wellspring of your emotions. I ask you only to recognize them when they come and to control them with the fine strength you have gained while fighting for the ideals and principles of America. Just remember that many joyous years of life are ahead of you and that the risk of spoiling them and the love that will fill them is too tremendous to run for a short hour of seeming pleasure.

Many of the boys who will come home with you have no mothers to write to them. Some of them may think that no one cares what they do. But somebody does care. America cares. And the girls they will marry some day care. And, oh, the difference it will make in their lives if they will just remember that there is always somebody, always!

Help them to remember. Help them to come home clean and fine. Don't let them spoil everything now. They have been so splendid.

If you think this letter will help them, give it to them. If they have no mothers let me be their mother until they have come back and taken the high places that await them here. Tell them to write to me—how I should treasure their letters!

And of course you will write to me. Just say that you understand—that you know why I have written this letter. Then I can wait, months—yes, even years, knowing that you will come home to me as fine and clean as you were when I sent you away to camp so long ago.

Mother



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